



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

www.westport-ma.com/climate-resilience-committee

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, March 10, 2022

Members present: John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair
Jim Whitin
Bob Daylor
Mark Rasmussen
David Brown
Constance Gee
Sean Leach
Tony Vivenzio
Ross Moran
Ray Elias
Ray Raposa
Donna Amaral
Phil Weinberg
Jake McGuigan

Members absent: Brian Valcourt
Michael Sullivan
David Sprogis

John Bullard called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

1. Introduction:

Members and attendees from the public introduced themselves.

2. Acceptance of 2/10/22 minutes: Bob Daylor motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by Jim Whitin, the committee anonymously voted to accept the minutes, therefore the motion carried.

3. Committee Reports:

- **Water:** Mark Rasmussen presented the Lower Buzzards Bay Sedimentation & Gooseberry Causeway Impact Study (22'-24') which will study the effects of sea level rise and strong storms related to the Westport coastline. This study is being done by the Buzzards Bay Coalition, department of Earth & Environment of Boston University, Woods Hole Group and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The study includes 17 shoreline miles between Briggs Point in Little Compton, RI and Mishaum Point in Dartmouth, MA. The study will have a focus on how the causeway impacts East Beach as well as the following;
 - Westport River backflow? Does the causeway prevent low-Nitrogen bay water from entering the river?
 - Allens Pond Inlet Stability- why is channel closing so often?
 - Slocum River Mouth Filling-in, restricting flushing to N-impaired estuary. Is this East Beach sand?

- Does the Gooseberry Causeway create ocean backcurrents that limit the ability of the Westport River estuary to exchange clean offshore waters from Buzzards Bay each tidal cycle?
- Could removal or alteration of the Gooseberry Causeway restore natural flushing to the river and thereby aid water quality recovery?

Mr. Whitin asked who will own the model in three years once the report is complete, in which Mr. Rasmussen stated that the model will live on the network computer system at B.U.

Mr. Bullard stated that Mike Sullivan had some brainstorming sessions and identified 6 categories with about 59 or so risks, which will be addressed at the next meeting. Mr. Bullard mentioned a few risks that are currently identified within the water subcategory that could be placed within a different subcategory, including the following; septic system inundation (health); protecting infrastructure and raising roads (infrastructure & safety); power lines (infrastructure); retreat and how do you pay for it (engagement & fundraising); increased frequency & severity of storms/ hurricane preparedness/ Life & property (infrastructure & safety); flood planning (infrastructure); increased summer temperatures & health impacts (health); ability of invasive insects/ EEE (health & agriculture); increased hydrological cycle – drought & flooding (agriculture, water & infrastructure); dam breaches (infrastructure); effect on elderly and other vulnerable populations (engagement & fundraising); PR efforts to reach out and how to talk to peers (engagement and health)

- **Infrastructure & Safety:** Bob Daylor provided an update and stated the subcommittee met on 3/3/22 and discussed working in parallel with the Towns various ongoing studies that are being done on infrastructure, and as a subcommittee, can make progress and contributions with focusing on safety add emergency response. Mr. Daylor reached out to the Town Administrator and Fire Department, and received a copy of the Towns 2004 Natural Hazard Disaster Mitigation Plan, and the chairs of the water, health and infrastructure subcommittees will focus on getting together to look at overlaps and integration of their activities and discussed possibly working on an updated plan. Daylor mentioned that in the current plan has action items, such as reviews and updates that are supposed to take place every two – five years, none of which have happened, and would like to help make those reviews and updates possible. Lastly, Mr. Daylor stated that he would like to mark the evacuation routes and flood hazard areas within town.
- **Health:** Phil Weinberg provided an update and stated that at their last subcommittee meeting, items discussed included the following; what the potential health impacts of climate change are, the associated long term risks, what the next steps of the subcommittee should be, and the areas to be prioritized and what should be focused on. Mr. Weinberg stated the subcommittee organized a list of 3 categories of focus, which included: excessive heat (vulnerable populations – such as elderly or pregnant) water related issues and how they correlate with health issues (water quality), and mental/ physical health (air quality and increased allergies and asthma).
- **Agriculture:** Ray Raposa provided an update and stated that the Agriculture subcommittee has not met yet, and would like to meet over the next two weeks.
- **Engagement & Fundraising:** Shana Shufelt provided an update and stated that the Engagement & Fundraising subcommittee has not met yet, with a planned meeting on Tuesday, 3/9/22, and is open to recruit any members who would like to help out.

4. Missing/ Overlooked Items:

b. Issues/ People/ Organizations/ Resources:

Sean Leach: asked if the committee would benefit from having someone from the EDC, or from a real estate/tourism background.

John Bullard: stated that a committee of approximately twenty volunteers will most likely not be adequate to tackle all of the issues that Westport is faced with, and encourages other types of resources (people, institutions) to help facilitate the committee.

Jeff Cantin: questioned if there was any type of risk assessment to follow to help prioritize items that the subcommittees recognize

Debra Weaver: offered facility to hold in-person meetings

John Bullard: would like to find a grant to get technical support for the committee

5. Other Business: The committee discussed how to move forward with virtual/ hybrid or in-person meetings. Mr. Bullard stated that virtual meetings allow members and volunteers to access the meetings from anywhere, and make it easier to attend, and therefore would like to keep the meetings virtual at this point in time.

6. Next Meeting: April 14, 2022

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Accepted 6/16/22